

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES TO FAMILIES OF SLAIN WASH- INGTON OFFICERS

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 2, 2009

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my deep sorrow and most sincere condolences to the families of Sergeant Mark Renninger, Officer Tina Griswold, Officer Ronald Owens, and Officer Greg Richards. These four officers, who so honorably served the Lakewood, Washington, Police Department, were tragically gunned down as they began their shifts last Sunday morning.

I, like all Americans, was shocked and horrified to hear of this brutal crime against four uniformed officers. Having grown up around law enforcement as a young police cadet, I know firsthand the challenges and dangers of the job, and the selflessness of those who wear the uniform and dedicate their lives to protecting their communities.

I come to the floor today to add my voice to all those expressing their grief and their outrage over these senseless killings, and I want to send my thoughts and prayers to the officers' families, especially the children these public servants have left behind. They will need untold strength in the coming days, but I know they will find all they need and more in the memory and example that their courageous parents have left for them.

Let us remember always the service of not only these four officers, but of all those who wear the uniform and make our safety their first priority.

PERMANENT ESTATE TAX RELIEF FOR FAMILIES, FARMERS, AND SMALL BUSINESSES ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 3, 2009

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, nearly all American families do not qualify for the Federal estate tax. In fact, under the law as currently written in 2009, 99.75 percent of estates are exempt.

The Federal estate tax has been amended many times through the years—most recently in 2001 as part of the Republicans' omnibus tax cut legislation. That measure gradually increased estate tax exemptions and lowered estate tax rates between 2001 and 2009.

In 2002, people with estates valued less than \$1 million (\$2 million for joint filers) after deductions for expenses, debts, and bequests to a surviving spouse or charity were exempt from paying the Federal estate tax. Those with estates above that value were taxed at a rate of 55 percent.

In 2009, people with estates valued less than \$3.5 million (\$7 million for joint filers) after deductions for expenses, debts, and bequests to a surviving spouse or charity are exempt from paying the Federal estate tax. Those with estates above that value are taxed at a rate of 45 percent.

The 2001 tax law phases out the federal estate tax in 2010 but then reinstates the tax in 2011 at the level it was in 2002—\$1 million for single filers and \$2 million for those filing a joint return. This fluctuation in estate tax rates has caused a great deal of confusion for business owners and farmers who are participating in estate planning. In order to provide more certainty to those individuals, the Congress has been working to set a permanent estate tax rate that would exempt nearly all but the very wealthiest Americans.

Through the years, I have voted to eliminate the estate tax or to maintain suitably high exemptions to better shield farmers and small business owners from the burdens of the tax. This year, I cosponsored H.R. 3905, bipartisan legislation written by Congresswoman SHELLEY BERKLEY (D-NV) that would permanently exempt estates valued at less than \$5 million for single filers and \$10 million for joint filers and set the tax rate on estates valued above that amount at 45 percent on a decreasing scale to 35 percent over the next ten years.

I have also cosponsored H.R. 3524, the Family Farm Preservation and Conservation Estate Tax Act, which was introduced by Congressman MIKE THOMPSON. This legislation would add a provision to the federal tax code allowing farmers and ranchers to defer payment of the Federal estate tax as long as the land is owned within the family and remains in agricultural production. H.R. 3524 would also defer the tax for land placed into a conservation easement. The measure would represent a win for farmers, for conservation and hunters, and for all of rural America. That is why it is supported by groups like the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the National Corn Growers Association, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the National Milk Producers Federation, the National Pork Producers Council, the Dairy Farmers of America, and the Agricultural Retailers Association.

While I would have preferred the House of Representatives to consider one of these well-written bills, the House of Representatives has considered a different measure, H.R. 4154, the Permanent Estate Tax Relief for Families, Farmers, and Small Businesses Act of 2009, which would permanently extend the estate tax levels at the current, 2009 rates.

It is very important for families, farmers, and businesses to have greater certainty with respect to estate planning. Groups representing a good number of Missourians expressed to me their views on this issue. The Dairy Farmers of America, which represents nearly 18,000 dairy producers in America, urged Congress to "take action now on this important measure" and to "support H.R. 4154." The American Farm Bureau Federation, while neutral on the bill, indicated the "need for certainty in estate tax law and the importance of maintaining the stepped-up basis." And, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations, wrote that Congress should "expeditiously approve a permanent estate tax solution to provide certainty for family-owned businesses and farms." The Chamber further indicated that "H.R. 4154, the 'Permanent Estate Tax Relief for Families, Farmers, and Small Businesses Act of 2009,' is a step towards this goal."

As a rural Missouri Congressman, I understand that farms and small businesses are dis-

proportionately impacted by the Federal estate tax. That is why I supported H.R. 4154. Under the 2009 estate tax guidelines, nearly all small businesses and farms are exempt from paying the tax. Only a small fraction of all estates in America—9,600—are expected to owe Federal estate taxes in 2009. For farmers, USDA data indicate that, after deductions, approximately 554 farm estates throughout our Nation would be considered taxable.

We should strive to reduce the number of farms and small businesses that are subject to the Federal estate tax. As I have mentioned, I have cosponsored legislation to do just that. And, to make clear my view that we should strive for higher tax exemptions, I was one of only 21 Democrats to vote with Republicans against the Rule to consider H.R. 4154 in the House of Representatives and was one of only 18 Democrats to vote with Republicans to send H.R. 4154 back to the Ways and Means Committee so that it could be improved.

At the end of the day, though, both of those procedural votes failed and we were left with two choices—either pass a bill to give farmers and small business owners more certainty or sit back and do nothing, which would allow the rates to become more painful to farmers and small business owners over the next 2 years. To me, that choice was easy. H.R. 4154 is a step in the right direction and I look forward to working with the Senate on this important legislation.

HONORING DIRECTOR ROBERT PARKER

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true leader and a dedicated public servant, Miami-Dade Police Department Director Robert Parker.

After honorably serving his country in the Army, Robert Parker continued his service by joining the Miami-Dade Police Department in 1976. With his hard work and dedication to the police department and to the residents of south Florida, he was able to earn his way through the ranks, eventually being appointed as the director in 2004.

As director, Robert Parker was in charge of the eighth largest police department in the country with more than 4,700 sworn and non-sworn personnel serving almost 2.5 million residents and visitors.

Director Parker's retirement culminates a long and illustrious career serving and protecting the residents of Miami-Dade County. The Mortgage Fraud Task Force initiated by Director Parker's department has become a national model of success in targeting mortgage fraud crimes.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in thanking Director Robert Parker for his dedicated service to the great people of south Florida and wish him and his family well in his retirement.

INTRADO 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

HON. BETSY MARKEY

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Ms. MARKEY of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Longmont, Colorado, based Intrado on the occasion of the celebration of their 30-year anniversary.

Founded by two Boulder County sheriffs, George Heinrichs and Stephen Meer, Intrado has played a key role in helping to define, build, and maintain the country's complex emergency communications system. Today Intrado provides the core of the Nation's 9-1-1 infrastructure, supporting over 200 million calls to 9-1-1 each year.

Intrado's history of emergency communications excellence is based on a strong foundation consisting of unmatched knowledge of emergency communications and public safety operations; proven experience in the design, deployment and operations of highly accurate, high-volume communication systems; solid reputation as a trusted and neutral custodian of sensitive data and; passion for saving lives.

Their extensive involvement in all aspects of the current 9-1-1 network has given them a unique perspective on how the system must evolve to support new technology, new system requirements and citizens' growing expectations. Intrado's customers include public safety agencies and the majority of the fixed wireline carriers, wireless carriers and VoIP service providers in the United States. Additionally, the nation's 6,000+ public safety answering points, PSAPs, rely on Intrado services for efficient 9-1-1 voice and data delivery. With the largest dedicated 9-1-1 call delivery network in the nation, Intrado can provide a broad range of customized and scaleable solutions.

9-1-1 is fundamental to telecommunications service. To meet this market requirement, Intrado helps telecommunications service providers ensure their subscribers' 9-1-1 calls are delivered to the correct public safety answering point (PSAP) over the dedicated 9-1-1 network along with the caller's accurate location information and call back number. As communications networks converge and 9-1-1 callers become more mobile Intrado has a proven track record of both anticipating and pioneering the solutions needed to keep pace with subscribers' demands for ubiquitous access to 9-1-1.

Intrado's contributions to the evolution of the 9-1-1 infrastructure include numerous technological and operational improvements as well as being responsible for more 9-1-1 technology "firsts" than any other commercial entity in the country.

Operates the largest dedicated 9-1-1 delivery network, with the highest data integrity level in the country;

Responsible for the ultimate delivery of over 90 percent of all 9-1-1 calls in the country;

Connected directly or indirectly to more than 6,000 public safety answering points in the country;

Supports over 200 million calls to 9-1-1 annually;

Maintains over 350 million records under management; average of three records per U.S. household;

Over 240 million wireline telephone records;

Over 120 million wireless records;

Over 1 million VoIP subscriber records;
Provides 9-1-1 services to more than 28 million members of the deaf community;
Processed an estimated 3 billion 9-1-1 calls to date;

Processed more satellite calls to 9-1-1 than any other service provider;

Processes an average of 500,000 updates to the 9-1-1 system daily;

Employees have more than 1,200 years of combined experience in public safety and telecommunications;

Holds licenses for over 45 U.S. and foreign patents, with over 100 pending.

Intrado's success has come in large part to its leadership, dedication and perseverance helping the public safety community. I want to thank them for all they have done to contribute to Colorado's economy and to the advancement of 9-1-1 and congratulations on this momentous occasion.

THE TEXAS AGRILIFE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, for 100 years, scientists at the Research and Extension Center in Beaumont, Texas, have worked to provide economic security to agricultural producers in southeast Texas. The center was created by the Texas legislature in 1909, and was charged with developing rice production and management programs for the Texas upper gulf coast. Today the center occupies ca. 960 acres near Beaumont, 113 acres in Eagle Lake, and 18 acres near Ganado, and is 1 of 13 research and extension centers affiliated with the Texas A&M University System and Texas AgriLife Research, the State's premier research agency in agriculture, natural resources, and the life sciences.

The Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Beaumont is the preeminent center in developing high quality, high yielding rice varieties, economically competitive and environmentally sustainable rice production and management systems, rice water conservation programs, cellulosic bioenergy crop production systems, and cutting-edge internet-based crop, pest, and environmental resource management decision programs and databases, providing economic well being to thousands of families in southeast Texas.

The center scientists work extremely closely with Texas rice producers and rice producers across the U.S., and maintain research programs with scientists from across Texas and from California, Louisiana, Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, and Mississippi. Current international research partners include scientists from Australia, Brazil, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, South Korea, and Sri Lanka, which has lead to the development of economically competitive and environmentally sound management systems that benefit Texas, the U.S., and the world.

The Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Beaumont is a showcase of agricultural and environmental research in the Upper Gulf Coast and looks forward to serving the needs of Texas, the Nation, and the world into the next century.

HONORING THE MARCHEGIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate the Marchegian Society of New Haven as they celebrate their centennial anniversary—a remarkable milestone for this very special organization.

Founded in 1909 by 36 men who had come to the United States from the Marche Province of Italy, the Marchegian Society was born out of a sense of responsibility to their fellow Marchigiani. They wanted to provide financial assistance for their fellow members in the event of illness, death, or accidents—not an uncommon occurrence at the turn of the century. Though the majority of the Marchigiani came from agrarian backgrounds, they were skilled artisans who were family oriented, industrious and proud of their work ethic. While they quickly assimilated into American society, the Marchegian Society provided them with a way to celebrate their shared ancestry, culture, and traditions.

The original members of the Marchegian Society met in a building at the lower end of Minor Street in the Hill section of New Haven, Connecticut. In 1923, the society purchased its present home on Cedar and Minor Streets. The acquisition allowed the organization to expand in size and led to the formation of the Marchegian Club for the purposes of social endeavors. In 1924, a group of 132 women founded the Societa Femminile Marchegiana which functioned under its own bylaws until a fusion pact was passed in 1936 giving the Marchegian Ladies Society an equal partnership with the men—an act of equal rights for women well before the concept became a national issue.

The construction of the present building was completed in 1936 and the new facility provided an outstanding space which soon became the social and cultural center of the community. Minstrels, musical shows, bowling contests, card games, bocce tournaments and weekly dances were among the many activities and charity events held there. The society remained a very progressive organization and continued to care for its members, providing sick and death benefits as well as cemetery plots for those members who could not afford one. The Marchegian Society provided a social and financial safety net for their members and, when the nation called on communities to sell war bonds during World War II, the society held numerous rallies to support the cause. The pride that they have shared, from generation to generation, in their community, their work, and their nation—that sense of family—is what has made this organization so special and what has enabled it to continue its mission for 100. The Marchegian Society is a community treasure.

Today, as members gather to celebrate, I am honored to have this opportunity to stand and extend my sincere congratulations to the Marchegian Society on their 100th anniversary. I have no doubt that the Marchegian Society will continue to be a source of pride for